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SOURCE IzgrevaMEDICAL CARE FOR MOTHERS, CHILDREN IMPROVES

After 9 September 1944, medical care for mothers and children in Bulgaria improved greatly. Article 72 of the Dimitrov Constitution states that the government takes special care of mothers and children, establishes maternity homes, children's homes, and children's dispensaries; assures a leave of absence for women during pregnancy and after childbirth, and guarantees free midwife and medical service.

Before 9 September 1944, Bulgaria had the second highest child mortality rate in Europe. Over 20,000 children died yearly during their first year of life. This can be attributed to the poor social conditions, shortage of medical service, and negligence of the Fascist administration. There was a shortage of curative and prophylactic institutions for children.

In the 6 years since 9 September 1944, children's clinics have been added to the hospitals of 15 okrug centers and to the hospitals of many okoliya cities. A special children's hospital has been opened in Sofia, while a second clinic for children has been established at the university in Plovdiv. Since 1944, the number of beds for sick children has increased ten times. Children's wards have been added to polyclinics of most Bulgarian cities. All Bulgarian cities now have polyclinics. Many maternity homes have been established in cities and villages, and pregnant women are assured free midwife service. Over 55 percent of births in Bulgaria occur in maternity homes and with the assistance of midwives. As soon as they are born, babies are vaccinated against tuberculosis. The number of births in maternity homes is expected to increase to 70 percent by the end of 1951.

Copying the USSR, many day nurseries and nurseries for orphans have been established in Bulgaria. The present number of such nurseries and nursery beds has increased 25 times over 9 September 1944. An additional increase of 30 percent is expected by the end of 1951.

The number of beds in children's sanatoriums has increased. Children are being vaccinated against tuberculosis with the Bacillus Calmette-Guerin vaccine on a large scale. This vaccine is produced by Bulgarian factories. In 1950, immunization against dysentery by means of bacteriophage was introduced for the first time in Bulgaria.

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The decree on protecting the health of children and pregnant women guarantees 3 months' leave with pay prior to childbirth to pregnant working women and 2 hours leave per working day for 3 months after childbirth to new mothers. The decree prohibits excessive work for pregnant and nursing women and increases their rations 50 percent.

Child mortality in Bulgaria is now lower than ever before.

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